

## Summary

Past experience and military potentialities destine the United States to lead a disproportionate share of future multilateral coalitions, a challenge that is compounded by the need for doctrine to conduct joint operations in a combined environment. Four tenets go far toward achieving success in a coalition war: *agility* which calls for maintaining balance and force in shifting situations while striking in fleeting windows of opportunity, *initiative* which means dominating the terms of battle and thus depriving the enemy of that same option, *depth* which considers every dimension of war and envelops the entire spectrum of events across time and space, and *synchronization* which applies combat power both at the optimum moment and in the right place while controlling a myriad of simultaneous actions. But no commonly accepted doctrine for coalition warfare exists today. Any multinational operation will require planning by all the participants, interoperability, shared risks and burdens, emphasis on commonalties, and diffused credit for success.

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# PRINCIPLES FOR COALITION WARFARE

By ROBERT W. RISCASSI

Since the beginning of this century, there has been a strong common thread in the involvement of American forces in combat. Almost every time military forces have deployed from the United States it has been as a member of—most often to lead—coalition operations. Rarely have we committed, nor do we intend to commit forces unilaterally. Our remaining forward positioned forces are routinely engaged in coalition operations during peace and are committed to do so in war. The

global interests and responsibilities of our Nation inevitably dictate that far more often than not our forces will be engaged in alliance and coalition activities. This article addresses fundamental tenets that underpin our efforts to create a doctrine for joint operations in a combined environment.

When we say we no longer intend to be the world's policeman, it does not mean we are going to disengage. It means we want more policemen to share in the responsibilities, risks, and costs of settling the world's most vexing problems—intrinsically, we are articulating a condition for wider and more active participation in coalition operations. Even though we consider this a responsible proposition on its merits alone, the redistribution of global wealth and economic power makes it also essential. In 1945, the American

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economy produced around half of the world's Gross National Product. Today, it comprises less than a quarter. In any event, coalition operations are generally key to legitimizing the use of force. Yet, both as a function of our historical experience as a leader of coalition operations and the continuing fact that America brings the most military power to the table, we should also recognize that American military leaders will almost always be called upon to lead multilateral coalitions in which we are participants. The fundamental question

becomes one of "how?"

Notwithstanding our reoccurring historical experience, we have at times been remarkably ill-prepared for coalition operations. In truth, we have not had, nor do we yet possess, a commonly agreed doctrine for forming or fighting as part of

military coalitions. Some may argue it is not necessary to have such a foundation; but, under its absence, we will have to address each new coalition on an ad hoc basis. Also in its absence, we have no comprehensive doctrinal base to create the means or tools to improve our ability to participate in, or lead, coalition operations. There is a clear and omnipresent reason to create such a doctrinal consensus. Five of our regional commanders in chief (CINCs) are coalition or alliance commanders, as is one of our specified CINCs.

There is no cookbook approach to coalition warfare. Every coalition will be different in purpose, character, composition, and scope. But there are some basic commonalities that confront any coalition commander. Obviously, the most valid basis we have to form a doctrine is our own historical experience. Yet, for the most part, our historic perspectives tend to analyze

the leaders who led victorious coalitions, as if the secrets of success lay in personalities more than methods. A doctrinal foundation must be based on methods.

Interestingly, and as a testament to their value, we have yet to experience an incidence where a prepared military coalition in which we are engaged has been attacked. In those cases—Western Europe and South Korea—where the coalition had the will, time, and resources to prepare for alliance warfare, the effects were never tested in battle. Thus, we cannot be certain their preparations were sound. It may have been that the tranquility they imposed undercut their ability to achieve essential concessions from nations whose priorities were more nationalistic than threat-oriented. Every other case we scrutinize involved ad hoc coalitions merged hurriedly in crisis or conflict. For obvious reasons, they also may not represent the model upon which we should create a doctrine. Between the two, however, there is ample experience to build a doctrine.

We know that joint operations, in and of themselves, represent significantly greater complexity than single-service operations. The Joint Staff is trying to create the doctrinal architecture to glue joint forces together in warfare. In a coalition, the difficulties of joint operations are still prevalent, but with the added dimensions and complexity of two or

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more national armed forces, all of which bring their separate orientations and proclivities to the practice of warfare. Often the apparent intractability of problems has been so awesome that any attempts at achieving unity have been limited to the strategic and operational levels. Battlefield responsibilities have been divided nationally based on the capabilities each nation brings to the coalition. Each national force is given discrete sectors and missions. A single leader is appointed to unify coalition efforts and—based on the numbers of national forces involved—decentralizes operations through national chains of command, which become multi-hatted. This is a patchwork approach. Seams are recognized but stitched together by strategic and



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operational agreement. Sometimes the seams are tight; sometimes they are loose.

If we look back at World War I, World War II, Vietnam, or even the Gulf War, we see variations on this structure and also the problems that resulted. In multiple cases, campaigns were disjointed by ruptures in timing, unity of purpose, or tactical disagreement. Often commanders found themselves in positions where mutual support was essential.

Yet, procedures were nonexistent or inadequate and had to be jury-rigged on the spot. Cross use of assets—combat, combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS)—was limited or foregone because of incompatibility. In some cases, vast technological

differences between forces caused either multiple tiering of the battlefield or over-reliance on the most capable units continuously to perform the most difficult missions. Differences in national doctrines, languages, and cultures often meant breaches in understanding, inability to communicate on the battlefield, fratricide, and disorganization. In short, effective operations were hindered by multiple sources of friction.

What are the elements essential to conducting joint operations in a combined environment? In other words, what have we learned and how do we intend to apply it the next time American forces are asked to lead a multinational coalition in combat?

#### Doctrine

The first point is that a coalition must share a common doctrine to take advantage of commonalities. Doctrine is more than simply how we intend to fight. It is also the technical language with which we communicate commander's intent, battlefield missions, control measures, combined arms and joint procedures, and command relationships. Doctrine is not contained simply at one level of war—strategic, operational, or tactical—it embodies all. Campaign execution demands that these levels of war become inextricably linked. To achieve the full synergistic effects

of joint combat power, the warfighting doctrine must be common to all arms. In the absence of a commonly understood doctrine, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to plan or execute military operations.

Yet, approaching a commonly agreed doctrine can be politically frustrating. Past U.S. attempts in Europe and Korea to enjoin allies to embrace AirLand battle were met with arguments that it is a distinctly American doctrine whose execution is technology-dependent—therefore suspected as a Trojan Horse for “buy American” campaigns—or that it is terrain-dependent and suitable only in Europe. Notwithstanding suspicions, having a commonly understood doctrine is essential to mutual understanding in battle.

The following four tenets—agility, initiative, depth, and synchronization—are the most firm basis for organizing and conducting coalition operations. They are not characteristically American attributes, nor are they limited to any single service. They are cross-national intellectual tenets which, when physically applied, cause success in modern war. Their application may be impacted by the technology available, but the tenets are essentially mental, rather than

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physical. They are a reflection of how technology has evolved modern battle, and may grow obsolete over time as the nature of war continues to mutate. As both mental states of mind and emphasized characteristics in battle, they allow us to bridge the intellectual gap between “principles of war” and practical execution. More particularly, when closely examined, these tenets strike at the heart of the most difficult, yet crucial aspects of joint and coalition operations.

Agility is compared to that quality found in great boxers who sustain an intuitive grasp of their position and motion in the ring—as well as their opponent's—and maintain the balance and force to move and strike as opportunity permits. In an environment that is constantly shifting, where the unexpected is to be expected, agility is essential. Battle is a contest where vulnerabilities and opportunities open and close continuously; victory goes most often to the commander and force



U.S. Navy photo by Gary D. Denman

The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Chase* and the Russian Maritime Border Guard frigate *Orel* in the port of Vladivostok.



with the balance and insight to strike or shift within these windows. Agility derives from a keen sense of what is happening in battle, the poise to transition rapidly from one situation to the next, and a physical and mental ability to always have more options than the enemy. It was powerfully displayed by General Walker and his coalition command in the battle for the Pusan perimeter. Relying on interior lines, Republic of Korea (ROK)/U.S.

forces continuously repositioned and reconfigured reserves to parry enemy thrusts, shifted forces along the outer perimeter to reduce or accept vulnerabilities, and concentrated and counterconcentrated combat power more rapidly than North Korean commanders. It

was a liquid defense that succeeded because it retained its balance to address the unexpected. Often, North Korean thrusts were repelled within a hair's breadth of a decisive breakthrough. Eliminating any seams between American and South Korean forces was vital to sustaining agility. All sources of combat power were pooled, boundaries and command relations were shifted as the situation required, and there was an absolute merging of joint and binational efforts. The agility of a multinational force proved superior to that of a homogenous enemy force.

Initiative, again, is a state of mind as well as an action-reaction cycle. At its core, it is dictating the terms of battle to an opponent, thus obviating the opponent's ability to exercise initiative. Thus, it is a highly contested quality whose balance swings on surprise, deception, speed of action, ingenuity, and asymmetric comprehension. Initiative requires flexibility in thought and action, an ability to act and react faster than an opponent, and a derived priority among subordinates at all levels regarding the linkage of their actions to the ultimate intent, more so than the scheme of higher commanders. It has been made all the more critical by the rampant pace or tempo of modern battle. No plan, no matter how detailed, can foresee every contingency, development, vulnerability, or opportunity that will arise in battle. In fact, the more detailed and inhibiting the plan, it may have the reverse

effect of limiting or restraining initiative. It was the quality exuded by Admiral Chester Nimitz and his commanders at Midway as they turned the tide of Japanese offensives through tactical and operational initiative. As Nimitz's forces closed with the more powerful Japanese fleets, they continuously sought to induce vulnerabilities in their opponent, until they were able to execute a decisive thrust that caught the Japanese fleets off-balance. Tactically, the decisive air attacks that won the battle were not a pre-planned operation; they were a timely response applied when the enemy fleet was located and deemed vulnerable to and within reach of an air attack. At the operational level, Nimitz exceeded his instructions to remain defensive and protect his precious carriers. But he did so because he understood the higher intent and was able to link both the risks and benefits of his actions to the larger campaign design. The impact was a strategic turning point in the Pacific campaign. Had Nimitz adhered to the letter of his instructions, it is unlikely he would have delivered this blow and the course of the Pacific campaign would have been different.

Depth requires both mental conceptualization and physical reach. It is applied as a reference to time, space, and resources. It recognizes that modern battle has eliminated linearity—and linear thought. War is a continuum of events and activities in space and time. Both the increased tempo of battle—whether through faster, more mobile ground forces, higher sortie generation rates for aircraft, or the evolution of fleets no longer tied to homeports—and the increased ranges, accuracies, and lethalties of weapons systems have compressed time and space. In all dimensions of war, the current and future battles must be interrelated. Like a chess player who views the board as a single, interrelated plane of action—and each move as a prelude to a series of further moves—the modern commander must extend his hand in time and space to create future vulnerabilities and opportunities, and reduce future enemy options. Coalition commanders at Normandy applied this tenet decisively. Recognizing the vulnerability of Allied landing forces to Field



U.S. Army photo by Al Chang

Soldiers of the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light) train for deployment to the Middle East to take part in Operation Desert Storm.

Marshal Erwin Rommel's ability to counter-concentrate heavy armor forces on the Co-tentin peninsula, they forged and executed a deep interdiction campaign to slow the movement of German armored columns and prevent them from arriving at the battlefield before the coalition was able to establish defensible beachheads. Simultaneous with the initiation of the air campaign, French resistance and Allied special operations units

executed a daring operation, targeting the concentration apparatus of German forces and further inhibiting the flow of German reinforcements from reaching the beachhead in time. The application of air-power was a unified effort combining air forces of several nations, and the interdiction umbrella covered all of the na-

tional ground forces participating in the invasion. The invasion succeeded because coalition commanders applied nonlinear thought to their operations, striking in depth in both the air and ground dimensions with the full palette of Allied capabilities.

Synchronization is perhaps the most difficult tenet to apply in coalition operations. It is a term often related to the inner workings of a watch. In that context, it is the calibrated movement of hundreds or thousands of different pieces moving in tandem and operating cooperatively to produce the desired effect. In war, the desired effect is simply combat power at the time and place of the commander's choosing. It is key to achieving unity and efficiency in action. Yet, in a coalition there are great inhibitors to effecting synchronization. Differences in language, technology, doctrine, and training act to deter efficiency and increase the potential for friction. These problems are not overcome simply through planning, although thorough planning is a key factor. Synchronization must also be fluidly applied as conditions change and the unexpected occurs. It relies on common procedures, a shared understanding of the language of battle, and smooth linkages between the disparate national entities in a coalition, at all levels. The success of General Douglas MacArthur's masterful Inchon landing and breakout of the Pusan pocket in the Korean War was an example of synchronization. He planned these

two operations as coordinated hammerblows to crumble the North Korean offensive and turn what appeared to be a risky operation into one of history's most memorable routs. The full series of operations—air, sea, ground, and amphibious—were carefully synchronized to achieve maximum shock and surprise. Because of the risks, the timing had to be precise, with each operation intended to create conditions for the success of the next operation. Coordination between services and national forces was exacting and thorough. Once the series of operations began, they operated in tandem to crush the North Korean offensive. The landing forces at Inchon moved deftly inland, cutting the North Korean lines of supply and operation, isolating and overextending the North Korean forces to the south, and setting the conditions for an audaciously executed breakout, which then converged northward. Air operations were executed to harass and interdict the withdrawal of North Korean columns. It was a tightly synchronized series of operations, involving the forces of several nations in a series of the most difficult, yet successful, joint operations in the history of warfare.

The principles of war also offer a way to intellectually massage the elements of an operation to understand its risks and strengths. Almost every nation's military relies on a list of principles; for the most part they are derivatives of one another. As a whole, the principles focus commanders and staffs in their effort to decide whether a course of action is prudent and to understand its risks. When viewed in context with the tenets, combined commanders have a solid intellectual foundation for action. Just as important, commonly accepted military principles serve as a point of reference when organizing the coalition and establishing command relations.

The tenets and principles are vital means to think about war, but these thoughts must be structured. The layering of military art into strategic, operational, and tactical levels is valid and for the most part universal. Although the layers are difficult to separate, they provide the intellectual linkage between campaigns, operations, battles, and engagements in a manner that ensures continuity of effort, as well as to describe the contributions



U.S. Navy photo by D.W. Holmes

British troops and units from other coalition countries gather for review by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm.

of various echelons to the overall effort. Moreover, as a coalition winds its way through these levels in planning, it forces the coalition's leaders to confer on every aspect of military efforts.

### Campaign

Agreement on strategy is the foundation for coalition action. It is derived from policy agreements between participating nations and must be sharp enough to shape the direction of an implementing campaign, yet broad enough to capture the efforts of the various national forces. The development of an effective military strategy is difficult even when military action is unilateral; it is far more trying in a coalition. Strategy is designed to accomplish political

objectives. Because of its proximity to policy, it will be the point of reference for gaining consensus between military and political leaders. Consequently, it is also most likely to be the center of controversy in both political and military spheres. Rarely do nations enter a coalition with identical views on ends to be achieved. As a coalition increases in numbers of member nations, conflicting objectives and additional political constraints are added to the pot. The coalition commander must walk a taut line between accommodating and compromising, yet preserve the ability to achieve military decision. At the same time, it is important to remember the old dictum that in coalitions the will is strongest when the perception of threat is greatest. Over time, as conditions change, so may the will and objectives of participating nations.

Coalition strategic formulation is difficult also because of the sheer mass involved in the effort. Strategy involves the melding and coordination of nearly every element of multinational power to accomplish military objectives. It may require insights into different national industrial capabilities, mobilization processes, transportation capabilities, and interagency contributions, in addition to military capabilities. It must bind all these together with precision and care. It operates on the tan-

gent edge of international relations and diplomacy and must seek congruency with these forms. It addresses issues as weighty as the endstate to be achieved and as mundane as the rules of engagement to be applied at each stage of operations. In coalition operations, strategy is the level of war where international politics and bodies are coalesced into a unified approach.

The ability to design an effective military campaign will be a calculus of the military strategy. At the operational level, disagreements that occur generally are among military professionals. But, there are of course political ramifications and considerations. The campaign must be paced or phased by the availability of combat power as it is generated from multiple national sources. The campaign plan also provides the base for defining and recommending national contributions. Unless this is done and provided to the various national authorities, the combined commander will end up with a force composition that is not rationalized toward operational requirements. The campaign plan has the integrating effect of serving as both the driver for force requirements and the timeclock for generating those assets.

The campaign plan is the tableau for synchronizing all elements of combat power. It provides combined commanders with the vital understanding to link operations, battles, and engagements to the coalition's strategic objectives. It is the orchestral arrangement of these various activities in a rational path to achieve the endstate envisioned in the strategy. It must address a variety of choices concerning the approach to warfare—offensive or defensive, terrain- or force-oriented, direct or indirect approach—and in so doing, becomes the enabling process for actually applying force.

Tactical operations should be designed to create a seamless battlefield where friction is minimized and the four tenets can be applied freely. This requires cooperation from all participating nations. It is at this level of war where the combined inhibitors to efficient operations could have their most degrading impact. At higher levels of war, success is mostly a function of planning and apportioning forces and resources to various missions. At the tactical level of



U.S. Army photo

An M-1 Abrams main battle tank moves across the Egyptian desert during Exercise Bright Star '89.

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war, forces must actually engage together in battle and function synergistically to defeat an enemy. All of the differences in training, equipment, language, and culture congeal to hinder the application of combat power. Events move rapidly and have a cascading effect. It is for these reasons that many coalitions have sought to conduct tactical operations, battles, and engagements within national boundaries. However, this ap-

proach cedes an advantage to enemy commanders who may target precarious seams. It accepts a vulnerability that could be costly and reduces collective combat power by incrementally separating the parts from the whole.

General Dwight Eisenhower's experience as European Theater of Operations commander in World War II amplified the difficulties that can arise at all three levels of war. Although the Combined Joint Chiefs of Staff met and agreed early in the war to pursue a strategy to defeat Germany first and Japan second, and to apply a direct approach against Germany through an early cross-Channel invasion into Europe, this is not what occurred. By late 1943, the United States had more soldiers, ships, airplanes, and landing craft in the Pacific than in the Atlantic. The British pressured for an indirect approach against Germany and convinced the American President to attempt an invasion up the boot of Italy before a cross-channel invasion into France could be launched. This further delayed the eventual date of the cross-channel invasion to the summer of 1944. Once the invasion occurred, Eisenhower faced continuing disagreements between his American and British commanders over whether the campaign should be on a broad front or concentrated on a single axis. He maintained his broad front approach, but acquiesced on one occasion to Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's insistence on concentration of resources in an attempt to achieve decision along the Flanders avenue into Germany. The result, Operation Market Garden, led to tactical quarrels between American commanders, who viewed the operation as too ambitious for the terrain, and Montgomery, who argued that temerity needed to be put aside. Market Garden failed, but not due to

lack of support by any coalition force. When it failed, Eisenhower returned to the broad front approach and it succeeded. The cross-channel invasion was later than initially anticipated, but did occur and was decisive. Germany was defeated first and Japan second. In short, neither nation got exactly what it wanted and the agreed strategy was not executed with any sense of discipline, but the objectives were obtained.

The use of centers of gravity, phasing or sequencing, main and supporting efforts, culminating points, setting conditions, and the other mental tools we use to organize and orient operations should be employed in planning and operations at every level. They are not uniquely American. They are neoclassical extrapolations drawn from military theorists worldwide. By using these tools, the commander merges the theory and practical application of the military art. Each of these mental tools is a critical point for creating broader understanding of the underpinnings of how force is to be applied, and for what purpose. When used for mental reference, they enable subordinate commands to move beyond robotic execution. They liberate subordinates to apply ingenuity, innovation, or situational adaptability to each event because they understand "true north" rather than simply the compass vector provided in the scheme of maneuver.

### Planning

A common planning process is essential. The degree to which allied commanders and staffs understand and are able to participate in planning impacts on the time required to plan and the sharing of knowledge of every component of operations. We rely on the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) as the underlying process to gain commonly understood perceptions of the threat and its organizations and capabilities, terrain, and other environmental factors that may impact on operations and courses of action available to enemy commanders. Without this foundation, applied as a collective and trickle down process that occurs from the strategic through tactical levels, it is difficult if not impossible to shape uniform perceptions of the threat or agree upon the coalition's courses of action.

DOD photo by Terry C. Mitchell



Australian troops arrive at a makeshift landing zone on a Marine CH-53 Sea Stallion to provide security for relief supplies being lifted into Somalia.



A key distinction is that the IPB must be a joint process. It must analyze every medium of the battle—air, sea, and ground—over time. In fact, every service has its own variation of the IPB process. Naval commanders look to sea lines of communications and enemy bases as the terrain or mobility routes pertinent to combat operations. They consider the enemy fleet's organization, capabilities, doctrine, and objectives and then design operations to deny these objectives. Air commanders analyze enemy air capabilities, bases, and courses of action before forming a vision of their own operational requirements. What has been lacking is a joint and combined IPB process that views the enemy commander's multidimensional operations as an entity. In a combined theater involving joint forces, such an intellectual template is the only holistic means to design joint operations.

There is an additional value to the IPB process. We emphasize the importance of getting inside the decision cycle of the enemy commander. Unless we do so, we cede the initiative of battle; a recipe for defeat. Instinctively, this means that all our processes—planning and execution—must be swifter than the enemy's. The cycle of detect, decide, target, and execute becomes all the more difficult when multinational forces are entered in the equation. As a general rule, the more organizations, joint and coalition, that must be integrated in an operation, the longer it takes to integrate or synchronize actions. The IPB process, which is continuous, is the best means to accomplish this. It creates a degree of predictability which is essential to get and stay ahead of enemy decision cycles.

From this point of departure, the coalition moves through the remainder of the planning process—statement of commander's intent, estimate of the situation, wargaming and formulation of the concept of maneuver, and the remaining sections and annexes of the coalition operation plan (OPLAN). The American structures for the OPLAN, operations orders, and fragmentary orders are the templates for order formulation and communication because they are reasonably complementary with most national systems and incorporate all the elements of the planning process itself.

## Integration

Implementing a common planning process is only a small, albeit important, part of bringing unity to coalition operations. The execution of these plans involves far more complex problems. Each nation will bring its own forces and capabilities to the coalition. Integrating these forces for action depends upon many variables. There may be, and usually are, vast differences in the organizations, capabilities, and cultures of military forces. As a general rule, differences are most severe in ground forces. Air and naval forces, because they must operate in international mediums, are equipped with communications gear and common protocols and procedures to provide for organized space management. All of the "vessels" that operate in the air or sea can be readily classified for their strengths and weaknesses to perform the various missions of air and naval warfare. Ground forces come in all shapes and sizes, and their equipment may be entirely dissimilar and incompatible. Technological differentials, particularly in this era of revolutionary change, can be vast. Therefore, fundamental commonalties become even more important.

At the theater level, integration results from functional design. There can be only one Air Component Commander (ACC), Ground Component Commander, Naval Component Commander, Special Operations Forces (SOF), and/or operational Marine Headquarters. Having two or more of any of these functional headquarters invites calamity. Yet, imposing functional integration requires more than creating headquarters. The interrelationships and synergies between functional commands stumble in the face of many of the same delicate issues that our own joint forces find difficult to resolve. The command relationship between ground-based air defenses and air forces, the apportionment of responsibilities and roles in deep operations and the relationship of multidimensional forces such as marines or



U.S. Army photo by Al Chang

U.S. Army infantrymen cross the Bug Han Gang River during Exercise Team Spirit, a combined South Korean/U.S. training exercise.

naval air or attack helicopters to various component commanders must be addressed. But the magnitude and complexity escalate because each national force has its own convictions on these issues. Moreover, coalitions may confront the obstacle of nations maintaining strings on various forces, or insisting upon stovepipe management of various elements. Concessions to any nation on any of these issues create precedents that others may insist upon. It may not be possible to derail all these inhibitors, but proliferation invites unmanageability.

It is helpful to analyze and integrate joint and combined functionality using the battlefield operating systems and the dynamics of close, deep, and rear operations.

These provide the bases to organize efforts, find the critical nodes where multinational integration must occur and ensure balance and mutual support in battle. But, for the purposes of joint warfare, the Army's definition of these areas is too narrow. For naval power, an additional point of analysis is surface, subsurface, special operations, and air. For air power, the various abilities of national forces to perform traditional air missions must be analyzed. These include close air support (CAS), battlefield air interdiction (BAI), strategic bombing, long-range interdiction, special operations, and counterair. For SOF, it is the means to perform the various functions of reconnaissance, military strikes, and integrating with the other combat arms.

As national force strengths and vulnerabilities across each of these functions are assessed, achieving balance will require a sharing and mixing of assets to increase synergy. Deep operations cannot be inhibited by national boundaries. Nor should any force be left without the ability to apply the tenet of depth. Because of international differentials in the ability to see and strike deep, the coalition must arrange its capabilities and command structures to extend this capability across the entire front of operations. The ability to see and strike deep to desired effect

is a function of flexibility. Fleeting targets of opportunity must be struck, however, by whoever is available to exploit the opportunity. Moreover, enemy dispositions and operations in his rear will be interchangeable across the front of operations; deep operations must always be viewed as an operational requirement because of the enemy's flexibility to shift and move forces not in contact. Just as there can be no blank spaces in linear operations, there can be none throughout the depth of the battlefield. But, deep operations beyond the control of maneuver commanders must be under control of a single coordinating headquarters. This is even more critical in coalition than unilateral operations. To do otherwise invites duplication, fratricide, and incoherence.

On the other hand, close operations may be divided into national sectors. But there are risks and inefficiencies in this approach. It could critically hinder the ability to mass combat power across national boundaries. Even if this approach is applied, it must be recognized that it does not alleviate the coalition's need to instill the agility to integrate forces in the close battle. Reserve formations, air power, and other sources of combat power must have the capability to

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be applied across the front of operations. Rear operations must be intermixed but tightly centralized. National lines of communication, main supply, and mobility routes will be in a disorganized competition for priority unless strong central control is imposed. It is unwise to decentralize rear area responsibilities. To do so undermines the need for integrated air defenses, organized responses to rear ground threats, and the organized security of the host population and nation.

#### Command and Control

The ability to integrate rests largely on one principle. Unity of command is the most fundamental principle of warfare, the

U.S. Navy photo by Dwight E. Martin



F/A-18C Hornets and Mirage 2000s flying together during Exercise Dasix Lafayette, a combined U.S./French exercise in the Mediterranean Sea.

single most difficult principle to gain in combined warfare. It is a dependent of many influences and considerations. Because of the severity and consequences of war, relinquishing national command and control of forces is an act of trust and confidence that is unequalled in relations between nations. It is a passing of human and material resources to another nation's citizens. In a coalition it is achieved by constructing command arrangements and task

organizing forces to ensure that responsibilities match contributions and efforts. Command relationships between national commanders should be carefully considered to ensure that authority matches responsibilities. It is cardinal that compromises not

be permitted to outweigh warfighting requirements. If political frictions inhibit proper assignment of authority, responsibilities and operational design must be altered to ensure unity of command.

Theater headquarters—the theater command and each of the component commands—should be both joint and combined in configuration and manning. Regardless of the nationality of the commander, the staff must represent the cross section of units under command. This practice of combining staffs must be followed to whatever depth of echelon that units are combined in formation. At the theater level, it may be essential to form combined joint targeting boards to manage the integrated targeting process for deep operations. Placing this under the ACC is often most effective, since the ACC will in all likelihood provide the majority of assets. The same form of tool may be necessary at each cascading level where joint and combined capabilities must be merged. Rear operations—the communications zone (COMMZ)—should be delegated to a single commander. Most often, the COMMZ commander will be an officer of the host nation. In those cases where the rear crosses multiple nations, as with the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea and UNC (rear) in Japan, it is essential to clarify the responsibilities and obligations of each nation in addressing or accomplishing the coalition's

tasks, as well as the limits to the coalition's flexibility to operate within national boundaries.

Subordinate or tactical commands may be organized as the situation dictates. A naval commander who comes to the coalition with only surface assets must operate in the envelope of a three dimensional naval force and should logically be subordinate to the three dimensional commander. As a rule, the commander with the most complex multidimensional force possesses the most total understanding of how to fight that force. Ground armies or corps will probably be multinational in configuration. In fact, tactical integration of ground forces down to the corps level is virtually essential.

Tactical integration—and therefore command and control, C<sup>2</sup>—of ground forces is arguably the most difficult to achieve; it will be attained most rapidly by early integration of some tactical units. Fundamental considerations are the factors of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available on the battlefield. This will dictate the alignment and missions of variously equipped and talented forces on the battlefield. Lightly armed forces can perform in military operations on urbanized terrain, densely foliated or mountainous terrain, heavy forces in more mobile environments, airmobile or motorized forces in virtually any terrain. While this may sound like common sense to an experienced commander, its practice becomes quite difficult when vertical boundaries and C<sup>2</sup> are dictated by the nationality of forces contained within the boundaries. As rapidly as possible, coalition ground forces must overcome any impediments to tactically integrated operations. To ignore this reality leaves vulnerable seams for enemy commanders to exploit, or it could cause placement of forces in unsuitable fighting conditions. Either could be fatal. There were a number of instances of this in the early stages of U.N. operations conducted during the Korean War. The virtual decimation of the Turkish brigade in the battle of Kumyangjang-Ni was a tragic instance of a tactical unit moved necessarily into a fluid battlefield that lacked the means to integrate operations with other

U.S. Air Force photo by H.H. Delfner



Saudi infantry take up position in a training exercise during Operation Desert Shield.

allied ground units. The unit fought fiercely against overwhelming odds in an attempt to stem the North Korean and Chinese counteroffensive occurring in its sector. As its losses mounted and the unit reeled under unrelenting enemy attacks, it was forced to fight in isolation and remained unable to rely on Allied combat power, which was available, or to coordinate its activities with American units on its flanks. During the early days of this conflict, the need for U.N. forces to be prepared to integrate tactically in unexpected circumstances was learned again and again. The need to ensure unity of command and to integrate forces under this principle became a matter of survival.



U.S. Navy photo

*USS Belleau Wood and USS Reasoner during Exercise RimPac '90 which included forces from Australia, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States.*

### Training

The first priority in generating coalition combat power from a conglomeration of nationally separated units is to train, emphasizing the fundamental commonalities outlined earlier. Only through training will combined units master and sustain collective warfighting skills. As the coalition is brought together, staffs and commanders must rapidly adapt to the units and processes in the fighting organizations being formed. The impediments and sources of friction become clear at once. So do the solutions that must be applied. This assumes, of course, that time is available for training before introduction to conflict. The situation may dictate otherwise.

General Joseph Collins, when he commanded VII Corps at Normandy, applied the techniques that are vital to ad hoc coalition warfare. When VII Corps forces hit the beaches at Normandy, they had been trained to fight a doctrine that had been based largely on earlier World War II experience. It proved woefully inadequate for the battle conditions faced by VII Corps. It became apparent that the doctrine was ill-suited to the hedgerows, flatlands, and built-up areas of France. In the midst of battle, Collins began to retrain and reinstruct his units as he constructed new doctrine applicable to the enemy and terrain he faced. He and his commanders analyzed every en-

gagement, gleaned the lessons to be applied in the future; testing new techniques and keeping them if they worked, discarding them if they did not. When units were not on the front line engaged in battle operations, they were training. When air-ground coordination and the procedures for tying in with Allied units on the flanks proved to be flawed, he invented new, more effective procedures on the spot. Within a few short weeks, Collins devised the doctrinal foundation that was applied by Allied forces successfully throughout the remainder of the European campaign—he did so under the most arduous conditions.

Standing coalitions should not need to rely on inventiveness and adaptability during conflict. Peacetime training should be designed to engage coalition forces in the most difficult and demanding tasks they may be asked to perform in war and to fathom the weak points that will cause friction under the most trying circumstances. The point is to identify, then eliminate or narrow the seams between forces that could reduce synergy and synchronization. Procedures that require multinational forces to operate seamlessly should be practiced routinely. Because of the complexity of joint and combined operations, the required skills atrophy quickly. Training should be joint and should reoccur cyclically at the operational and tactical levels. This is essential both to build the basis for trust, which will be vital in war, and to identify the abilities and limitations of coalition forces. For an ad hoc coalition, the same methodology applies, but the time available may be condensed and have to occur during hostilities.

Simulations are proving to be a means to exercise these skills and techniques frequently and inexpensively. They train commanders and staffs on essential planning and execution skills and may be applied through the range of strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. When effectiveness is analyzed through the lens of battlefield operating systems and the tasks, conditions, and standards of various expected missions—attack, defend, delay, passage of lines, battle-handover, airmobile operations, CAS, amphibious assault, and so forth—a host of invaluable lessons may be accumulated.

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Even still, simulations cannot be a total substitute for field training. Small, yet important problems will escape visibility—national differences in air-to-ground attack procedures . . . cultural differences such as holy days or food restrictions . . . or even the absence of digital communications capability in indirect fire units of some armies may not become apparent. These point to the need for field training at the tactical, combined arms level.

Combined commanders must provide the focus and direction to organize training. They must provide subordinate commanders those mission essential tasks that must be conducted in combined operations and the tasks, conditions, and standards to be maintained.

Because time and resources for combined training are limited, it is all the more important that combined commanders give priorities for combined training that focus units on those missions most likely to be performed in combat.

Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence

Applying the tenets of combined doctrine relies on a command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C<sup>4</sup>I) architecture that is capable of integrating the joint forces of all the nations in the coalition. It is in the various functions embedded in C<sup>4</sup>I that American forces possess some of their greatest advantages on the battlefield. Indeed, as we continue to improve our capabilities for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence, managing the vast amounts of information upon which decisions are made and incorporating more and more computer aids to the battlefield decision and execution processes, we must exercise care that these systems do not evolve into exclusionary processes. Unless the architecture incorporates the ability to share with, and in turn receive from, other national forces, the battlefield will not be seamless and significant risks will be present.

The impediments to achieving integrated C<sup>4</sup>I are several fold. First, of course, is the language barrier. Each order that is produced, every issue that arises unexpectedly on the battlefield, and every transmission

must be laboriously translated into the multiple languages included in the coalition. This steals precious time from the detect-decide-target-execute cycle and is apt to be fraught with errors. Although it is common for coalition headquarters to maintain translation cells, their speed will depend on the size and complexity of information to be processed, and the accuracy of translation will vary from translator to translator. Moreover, absent a common doctrine, basic military terms differ from nation to nation. The result, generally, is a severe narrowing in the amount of information conveyed between coalition commanders. Overcoming this, as a minimum, requires multilingual software that ties back to a common operating system. Because of the need to be rapidly employable by many national forces, its software must be user friendly and easy to learn. In addition, coalition headquarters should have prepared dictionaries of common military terms and symbols, both as a translation base for information management systems and to reduce the latitude of different translators to portray differing meanings. A final sidenote is that as forces enter a coalition, their capabilities and assets must be entered immediately in C<sup>4</sup>I data bases to enable theater command staffs to incorporate them into the multiple aspects of battle management and planning for the coalition. Because many nations now employ computers in managing their forces, it is also important that we share common standards within our peacetime alliances which will permit a rapid merging of information management systems.

These fixes, however, do not eliminate the problems at tactical levels where decisions and orders generally are not processed through multilingual systems, and teams of translators are not available. Moreover, different forces will bring noninteroperable communications devices, which block lateral and horizontal relations. Here there is no alternative but to determine where the critical nodes of multilateral contact occur and position translator liaison teams equipped with communications systems that expedite cross-communications. It is especially important to view the requirements for liaison cells from a joint perspective. Many land



DOD photo by Marv Lynchard

U.N. peacekeeping forces from Pakistan board a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules for a flight to Somalia.

forces, for example, do not have alliance liaison officers or do not position them below division level.

The sharing of intelligence and sensitive technical means will depend on providing the interpreted product of battlefield intelligence to each member of the alliance. The United States brings to battle the most sophisticated and enviable capability to gain deep operations visibility of any nation in the world. If it is kept in seclusion, it will significantly reduce the combat power available for deep operations and force other alliance members to fight blindly with regard to time. Some nations have alternative means and systems, and these should also be incorporated into a workable intelligence collection plan whose products are accessible to others.

Yet few nations, including the United States, are willing to share the sensitive sources of intelligence gathering or enlighten other nations on the technical strengths and weaknesses of various collection means. Military coalitions may include partners whose reliability is stipulated on the threat at hand and will not last beyond the resolution of the contingency—a point wryly observed by Prime Minister Winston Churchill when he noted he would sleep with the devil when survival was at stake. As well, our past history with coalition warfare has incorporated nations with whom we were already engaged in other alliances, such as NATO, where the protocols and limits of intelligence sharing are already embedded. Notwithstanding, allies must share intelligence at the tactical and operational levels as a minimum. As new collection means are introduced into our force, such as Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System or remotely piloted vehicles, we must have means to rapidly share their products with coalition partners. Intelligence sharing arrangements must be rapidly agreed, even if sources are not shared. In fact, the more quickly allied forces become claimants and recipients of pooled assets, the variables of agility, initiative, depth, and synchronization increase accordingly.

#### Logistics

Logistics management of coalition forces is a matter ultimately dependent on a wide field of variables. National arrangements,

host nation support agreements, equipment compatibility, and cultural requirements are but a few. Some coalition forces will enter the coalition with the intention and means to provision themselves. In these cases, coalition control may be no more than a need to coordinate; or, providing ports of entry, off-load capabilities, storage sites, and routes and means for pushing sustainment forward. Others will arrive with the need for more extensive support. This may be solvable through binational agreements from one member nation to provide support to another, or may require active coalition management. As a rule, actual execution of tactical logistics support to alliance members should be decentralized. At the coalition headquarters level, the focus should be on measuring the requirements of executing the campaign plan, providing advance estimates of these requirements to national units, and ensuring that proper controls are in place to deconflict and permit movement and processing of combat power to units.

Its practice is remarkably difficult. Simulations, again, can be a tremendously valuable tool for finding problem areas before execution. Problems which are unique to coalition warfare continually surface. Depending on the infrastructure available in theater, there may be many claimants on sparse local resources. Potable water, fuel pipelines and storage, shelter, and local food production are almost all national infrastructures built at the capacity required to sustain the local population, and nothing more. Some national forces do not have the means for bulk delivery over long distances, or even a field ration system with preservable commodities. Unless centralized management is applied, each national force is likely to contract independently to acquire these essential goods. Aside from being inefficient and unwieldy, this approach will also ensure instant inflation in the costs of local goods and services, which is harmful to operating budgets and even more disastrous for local citizens who lack the capital to outbid national military forces. In effect the coalition headquarters must enter a unique relationship with host nation authorities for contracting goods and services, to include manpower and labor,



U.S. Navy photo by Norris Jones

The destroyer *USS O'Bannon* arriving at Kiel during Exercise BALTOPS '92 with the German national ensign flying in the foreground astern the destroyer *FGS Molders*.

and then serve as the intermediary between national force requirements.

Just as there may be significant technological differentials in the combat capabilities of various forces, there could be large differences in the quality and magnitude of support provided. As CS and CSS are echeloned rearward, various capabilities may have to be pooled. American or European field hospitals, for example, may have to be prepared to accept allied casualties. Ammunition stocks, if they are compatible with allied systems, may have to be shared. Each class of supply and form of support must be considered for each national force in order to identify requirements for mutual dependency. If this is not done, it could result in a loss of combat

power or unexpected perturbations in the midst of operations.

The coalition headquarters is also uniquely situated to apply efficiencies that will minimize the diversion of potential combat power from the battlefield. Arrangements for cross-national support, host nation contracts to shift transportation or other functions to local firms, developing nodal points for transferring supplies and materials, and other means should be employed to reduce independent burdens for moving goods from the ports or airfields to the forward line. Distribution and local repair systems should be pooled wherever possible to limit the numbers of personnel required to perform support functions, and reduce the confusion of controlling rear areas. Combined logisticians must always be on watch for opportunities to find efficiencies and improvements in the logistics architecture. They must step above the paradigms of their own national doctrines and structures and look for ways to combine efforts.

Some would define the purpose of military doctrine and leadership as to achieve order in the chaos of battle. In coalition operations we do this by accentuating the commonalities that exist: first, between our national interests; second, between how we intend to deal with threats to mutual interests; and then in how we actually apply our combined forces in battle.

Where commonalities are required but lacking, we move quickly to create them. Often, a coalition's cohesion will depend on the proportionate sharing of burdens, risks, and credit. All these can be most fairly and satisfactorily apportioned if the total force is able to operate as a single entity.

The key to achieving this unity is by promulgating a doctrine for warfighting that is commonly understood and applied. Planning systems must be collective and participatory, yet responsive and unerringly timely. Those areas where the seams are most prominent, and therefore where friction is most likely to arise—through combined tactical integration, C<sup>4</sup>I, training, and logistics—need to be rapidly analyzed and tested, then sewn tighter. Obvious differences such as language, culture, or interoperability cannot be eradicated, but they can be minimized. These dictums hold true for both long-term and ad hoc coalitions. Indeed the tools and lessons we develop in our standing coalitions must be captured and employed in the formation of ad hoc coalitions to accelerate the cohesion of coalition forces.

Technology also offers means of improving the unity and effectiveness of joint operations in a coalition environment. It can be applied to bridge different languages and operating systems. It also can be applied to share and integrate national resources, whether in combat systems, logistics management, or the flow of information to every component in joint and combined warfare.

For the foreseeable future, American military leaders will most often be the leaders of multinational military coalitions. As the U.S. Armed Forces continue to reshape for the challenges of the post-Cold War era, it is important that the requirements of coalition warfare remain a priority effort among all services. Every improvement in coalition operations that we bring to the battlefield will have an impact on the success of operations and reduce the human toll for our own forces, as well as every one of our allies. We have the technology and experience to improve coalition warfare. The understanding of joint and combined doctrine is the first step.

JFQ



DOD photo by Terry C. Mitchell

U.S. Navy Seabees drill for water in support of multinational forces at an airfield northwest of Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope.

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